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MARVEL

SHANG-CHI MASTER OF KUNG FU

No. 1

SUPER ISSUE

NO MAN CAN STAND AGAINST...

SHANG-CHI MASTER OF KUNG FU

48

ALL-NEW PAGES

IN GLORIOUS

BLACK & WHITE!

FEATURING A SUPER-SIZED COLLECTION OF STEEL-SMASHING MARTIAL ARTS ACTION STRIPS!

From the day he was born the man known as Shang-Chi was raised by his father to be the world's greatest assassin. He studied the ways of the martial arts and of kung fu, honing his mind, body and spirit to a razor's edge. Then the day came when Shang-Chi was sent by his father to take the life of an innocent man. On that day Shang-Chi turned his back on his father's evil ways and became much more than a living weapon. He became…

SHANG-CHI
MASTER OF
KUNG FU

THE ANNUAL RACE TO BENEFIT VARIOUS AND SUNDRY EVIL ORGANIZATIONS AND ALSO THE HOMELESS. NOW WITH BEER AND HOT DOGS....PG.1
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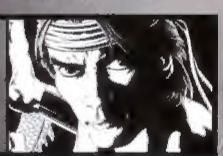
ONCE UPON A TIME IN WAN CHAI.....PG. 23
WRITER: MIKE BENSON
ARTIST: TOMM COKER with C.P. SMITH

THE VACCUUM OF MEMORY.....PG. 34
WRITER: CHARLIE HUSTON ARTIST: ENRIQUE ROMERO

THE TAO OF THE WARRIOR: FROM NOVICE TO LO FU ZAI.....PG. 45
WRITER: ROBIN FURTH ARTIST: PAUL GULACY



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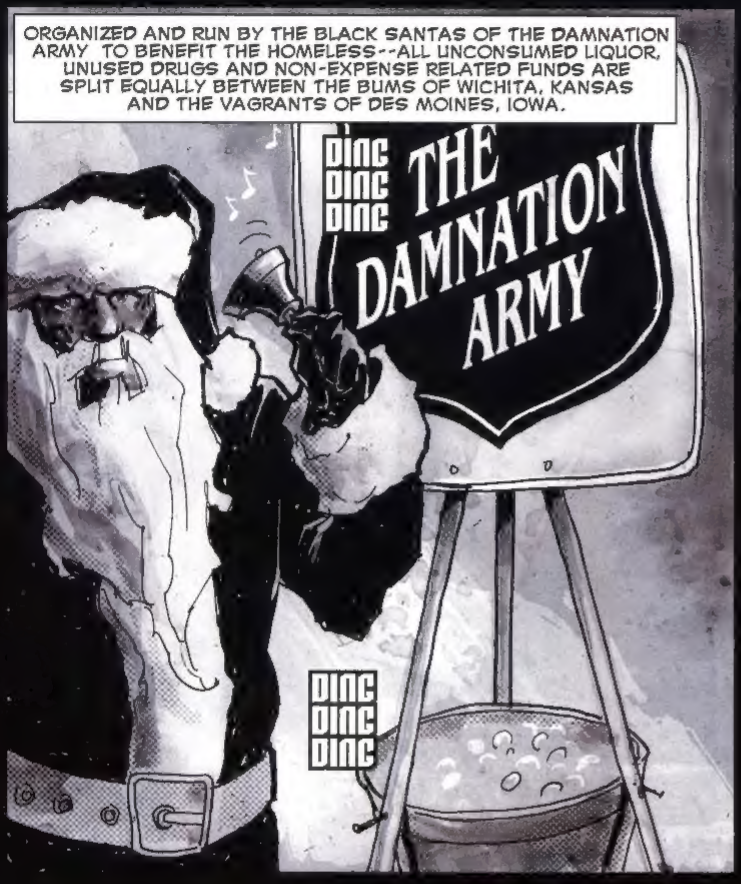
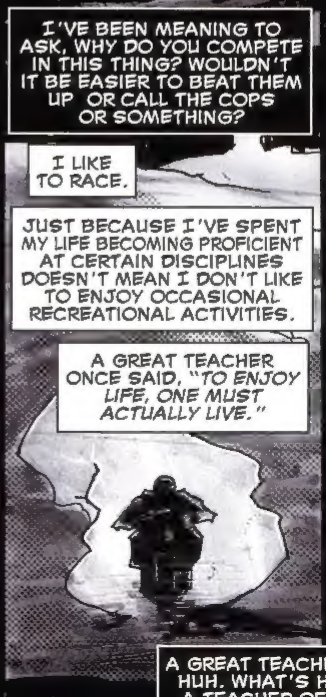
WHAT FOLLOWS IS THE STORY OF THE LAST EVER SUMMER SOLSTICE BURNOUT.
A BIKE RACE ACROSS THE DESERT WHERE THE CHIHUAHUAN SAND MEETS THE SHADOWS OF THE SIERRA MADRE.


ORGANIZED AND RUN BY THE BLACK SANTAS OF THE DAMNATION ARMY TO BENEFIT THE HOMELESS--ALL UNCONSUMED LIQUOR, UNUSED DRUGS AND NON-EXPENSE RELATED FUNDS ARE SPLIT EQUALLY BETWEEN THE BUMS OF WICHITA, KANSAS AND THE VAGRANTS OF DES MOINES, IOWA.
DING DING DING
THE DAMNATION ARMY
DING DING DING

HELP EASE A SINGLE MOTHER'S PAIN. FREE DRINKS FOR THE LADIES.
HERE YOU GO.
THANK YOU, SIR.
MALT LIQUOR. MALT LIQUOR...THINK OF THE CHILDREN.
CLINK!
DING DING DING

THEY COME FROM ALL OVER: SOME OF THE EVILEST MEN IN THE HEMISPHERE HOPING TO LIFT THE CUP AND CLAIM THE PRIZE.
INSTEAD, FOR THE LAST 3 YEARS, THEY HAVE BEEN TAUGHT HUMILITY AND TASTED ONLY DEFEAT--FOR I HAVE WON IT.


I'VE BEEN MEANING TO ASK, WHY DO YOU COMPETE IN THIS THING? WOULDN'T IT BE EASIER TO BEAT THEM UP OR CALL THE COPS OR SOMETHING?
I LIKE TO RACE.
JUST BECAUSE I'VE SPENT MY LIFE BECOMING PROFICIENT AT CERTAIN DISCIPLINES DOESN'T MEAN I DON'T LIKE TO ENJOY OCCASIONAL RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES.
A GREAT TEACHER ONCE SAID, "TO ENJOY LIFE, ONE MUST ACTUALLY LIVE."
A GREAT TEACHER, HUH. WHAT'S HE A TEACHER OF?

OH, DON'T MAKE ME SAY IT.
HELLO, MOST DISHONORABLE OPPONENTS.
I HOPE YOU HAVE SUFFICIENTLY PREPARED YOURSELF FOR THE HUMBLING SOON TO ENSUE.
I DON'T TALK LIKE THAT.
QUIET. I'M THE ONE NARRATING.
NO YOU AREN'T, I AM.
FINE. WE'LL TAKE TURNS. AGE BEFORE BEAUTY?

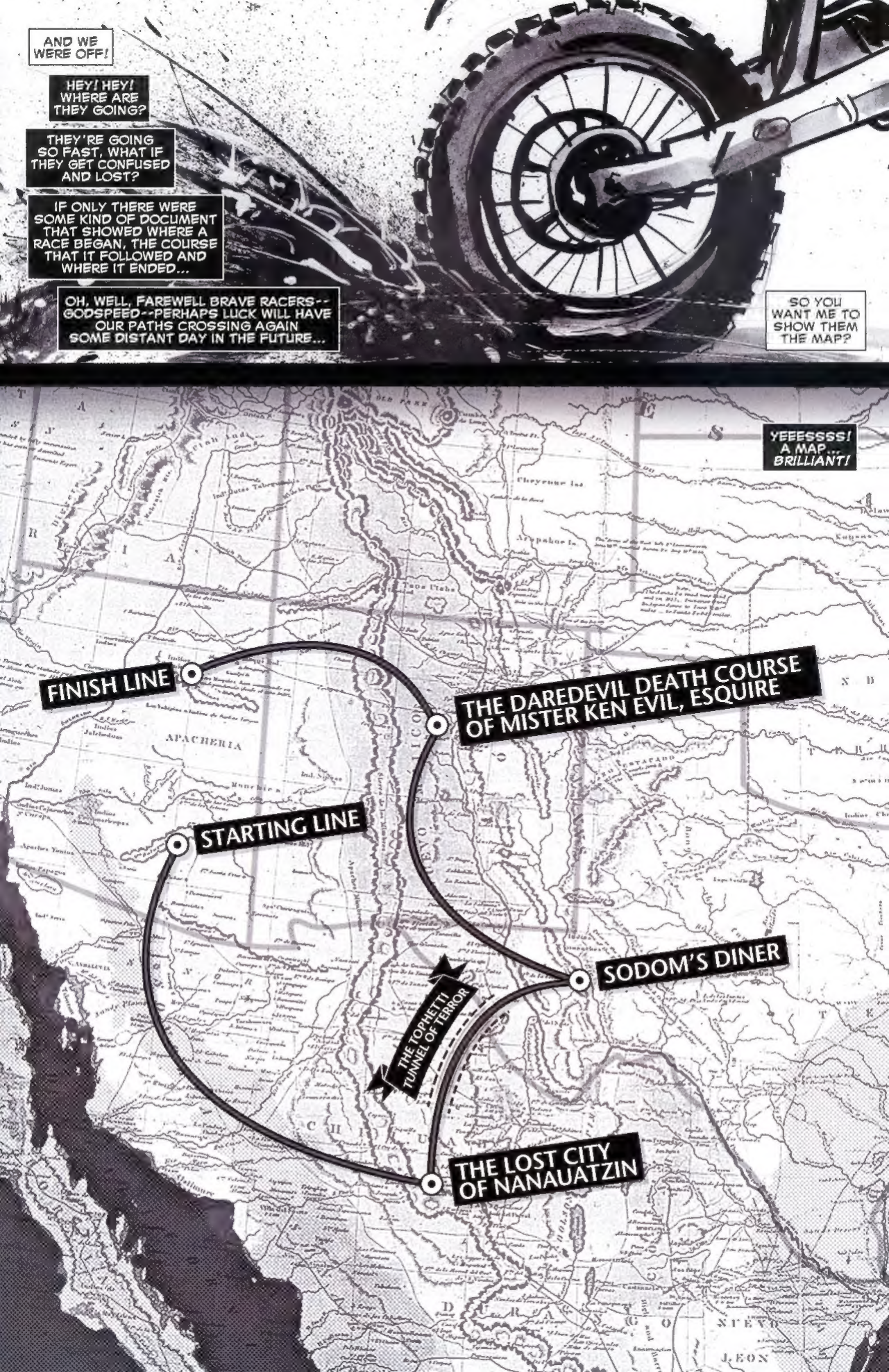
DEFEAT HAD MADE THESE EVIL MEN BITTER AND WITH TIME THAT BITTERNESS TURNED TO MALICE.
THEY ALL WANTED REVENGE...THE BLACK SANTAS, THE HITLER TWINS FROM PITTSBURGH...
THE CROSS-DRESSING, CAT-THEMED PROFESSIONAL WRESTLERS FROM THE WOMEN'S EXTREME WRESTLING LEAGUE: MISS SCRATCHY, SPOT AND DOCTOR HEMORRHOID...
THE NEEDY WOMEN OF RENO: ARIA, ARIANNA, ALANNA, AND ARIA...
THE THINKING MEN OF PALO ALTO: CAPTAIN ENVIRONMENT, CORPORATION MAN, THE INTERFACE AND CAPPUCCINO...
AND THE LUCHADORES...
THEY WANTED REVENGE--ALL OF THEM--SO BADLY THAT THEY MADE THE MISTAKE OF POOLING THEIR MONEY TOGETHER AND HIRING AN OUTSIDER TO MAKE SURE I WOULD NEVER AGAIN WIN THEIR RACE.

SHANG-CHI: MASTER OF KUNG-FU & DEADPOOL IN
The Annual Race to Benefit Various and Sundry Evil Organizations and Also The Homeless

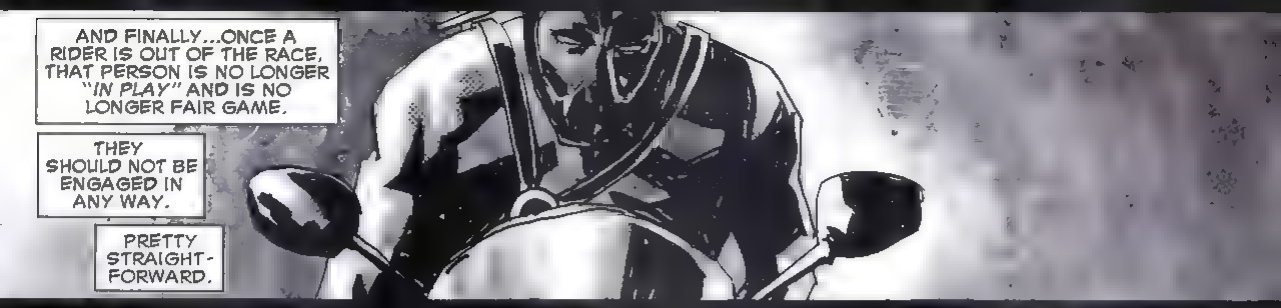
NOW WITH BEER AND HOT DOGS
SOMETIMES YOU DO NOT GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR.
SAY IT WITH ME:
CROTCH ROCKET.
SOUND ACCURATE?
IT ROLLS OFF THE TONGUE.
CROTCH. CROTCH. CROTCH.

AND THEN IT WAS TIME TO RACE.
A SMALL ARMY OF COMPETITORS EDGED THE STARTING LINE. THE SUN WAS BEATING ON OUR BACKS AND THE SMELL OF GAS AND OIL FILLED THE AIR.
THEN THE FLAGGER DROPPED HER HANDKERCHIEF AND THE RACE WAS...
WAIT. WAIT. WAIT...
YOU FORGOT...
THIS HAPPENED FIRST.
HEY! BOTH OF YOU GUYS HAVE BLACK EYES, HOW DOES SOMETHING LIKE THAT HAPPEN?
MINE WAS A SLIP OF ZE TONGUE.
TWO DAYS AGO I WENT TO ZE AIRPORT FOR A LAST MINUTE FLIGHT AND WHEN I WENT TO PURCHASE A TICKET FROM ZE AIRLINE I WAS TAKEN ABACK BY THE ENORMOUSLY ENDOWED NATURE OF ZE WOMAN AT ZE COUNTER.
UNDERSTAND, I'M TALKING ABOUT ZE LADIES' HUGE BREASTZZZ.
YEAH, SURE.
WELL...I MEANT TO SAY TO HER, "I'D LIKE A TICKET TO PITTSBURGH"-- INSTEAD I SAID, "I'D LIKE A PICKET TO TI--"
AHH!
ZEN SHE PUNCHED ME IN ZE FACE.
UNDERSTANDABLE.
WHAT ABOUT YOU?
HRMMPH!
ACTUALLY, CITIZEN, IT WAS THE SAME THING...A MOMENTARY LAPSE IN JUDGMENT, A BLUNDER, A GAFFE...YES, YES, IT WAS A SLIP OF THE TONGUE.
DO TELL.
I WAS HAVING BREAKFAST THIS MORNING WITH MY WIFE--TOFU, TOAST...A BIT OF TURKEY BACON-- AND I MEANT TO SAY, "DEAREST, WILST THOU PLEASE PASS THE SALT"...

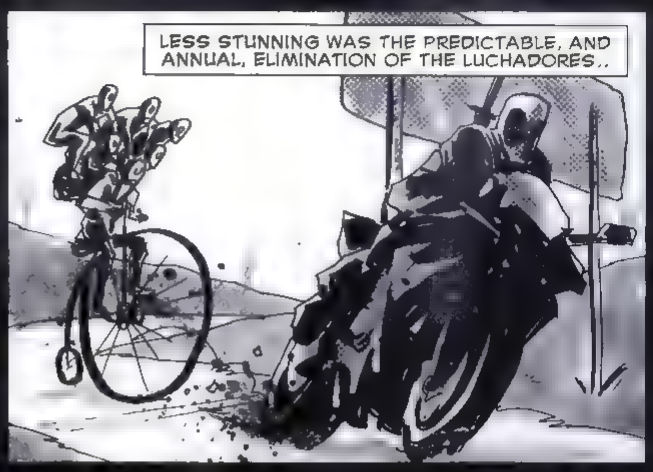
INSTEAD I SAID, "YOU RUINED MY LIFE, YOU MISERABLE WHORE."
THAT'LL HAPPEN.
OKAY, NOW YOU CAN DO THE START OF THE RACE.
THANKS...AS I SAID. THE SUN WAS BEATING ON OUR BACKS AND SMELL OF GAS AND OIL FILLED THE AIR.
WHO'S READY TO RACE?!?
THEN THE FLAGGER WAVED HER HANDKERCHIEF...
GO!!!


AND WE WERE OFF!
HEY! HEY! WHERE ARE THEY GOING?
THEY'RE GOING SO FAST, WHAT IF THEY GET CONFUSED AND LOST?
IF ONLY THERE WERE SOME KIND OF DOCUMENT THAT SHOWED WHERE A RACE BEGAN, THE COURSE THAT IT FOLLOWED AND WHERE IT ENDED...
OH, WELL, FAREWELL BRAVE RACERS--GODSPEED--PERHAPS LUCK WILL HAVE OUR PATHS CROSSING AGAIN SOME DISTANT DAY IN THE FUTURE...
SO YOU WANT ME TO SHOW THEM THE MAP?
YEEESSSS! A MAP... BRILLIANT!
FINISH LINE
THE DAREDEVIL DEATH COURSE OF MISTER KEN EVIL, ESQUIRE
STARTING LINE
SODOM'S DINER
THE TOPHETTI TUNNEL OF TERROR
THE LOST CITY OF NANAUATZIN
APACHERIA

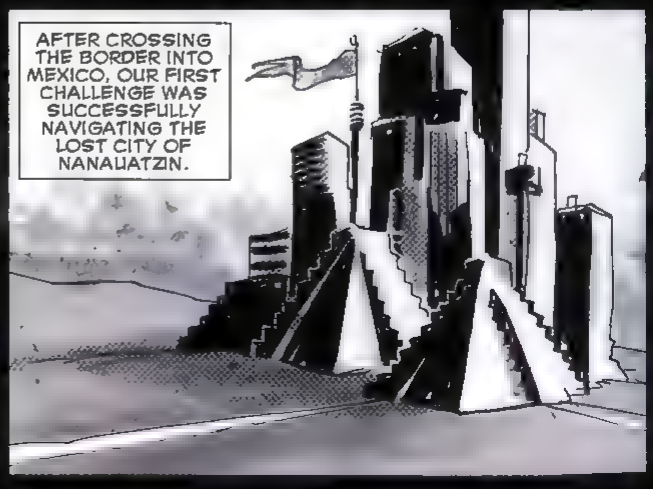
NOW IS AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY TO GO OVER THE RULES OF THE RACE:
ONLY BLUNT OBJECTS AND EDGE WEAPONS MAY BE USED DURING THE COURSE OF THE EVENT.
GUNS, GRENADES, ROCKET LAUNCHERS AND ANY OTHER PROJECTILES ARE PROHIBITED.
EXCEPT FOR DESIGNATED REST AREAS AND RACE CHALLENGES, IF ANY RIDER GETS OFF OF--OR IS REMOVED FROM--THEIR BIKE, THEY ARE IMMEDIATELY DISQUALIFIED.


AND FINALLY...ONCE A RIDER IS OUT OF THE RACE, THAT PERSON IS NO LONGER "IN PLAY" AND IS NO LONGER FAIR GAME.
THEY SHOULD NOT BE ENGAGED IN ANY WAY.
PRETTY STRAIGHT-FORWARD.

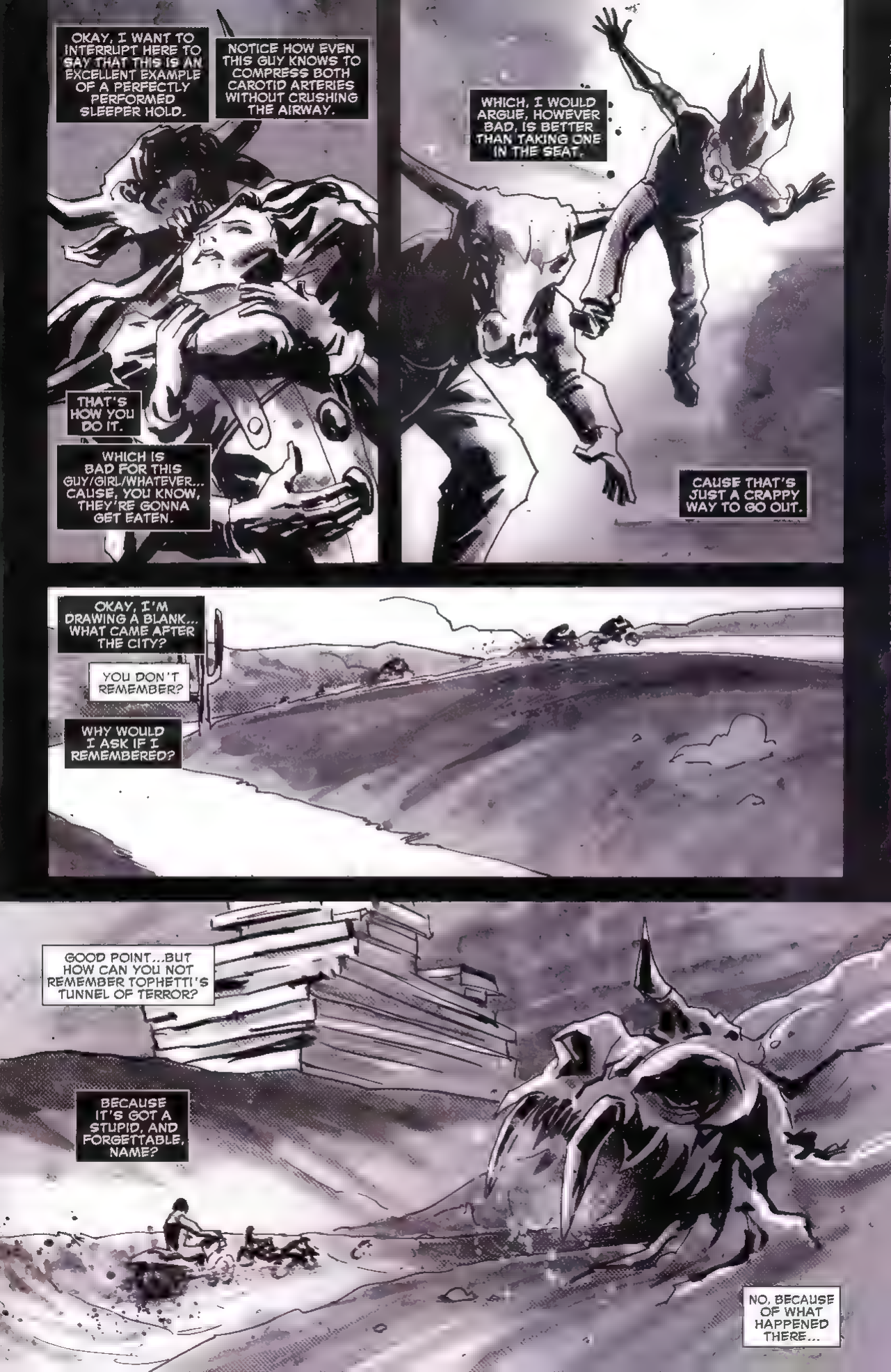
RACE CASUALTIES WERE EARLY AND OFTEN THAT YEAR.
SURPRISINGLY, THE HITLER TWINS WENT OUT FIRST.


LESS STUNNING WAS THE PREDICTABLE, AND ANNUAL, ELIMINATION OF THE LUCHADORES..

EVERY YEAR THEY STARTED OUT WITH THE INTENTION OF WINNING THE RACE, BUT WHEN IT CAME TIME TO CROSS THE BORDER, THEY COULDN'T STAND TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY THEY HAD GROWN TO LOVE.
MEXICO BORDER
OH, AND THEY WERE ALSO WANTED ON DRUG TRAFFICKING, EXTORTION, AND KIDNAPPING CHARGES.


AFTER CROSSING THE BORDER INTO MEXICO, OUR FIRST CHALLENGE WAS SUCCESSFULLY NAVIGATING THE LOST CITY OF NANAUATZIN.

NORMALLY THE FINDING OF A HIDDEN, HAUNTED CITY AND OVERCOMING A GIANT LABYRINTH OF DEATH AT ITS CENTER WOULD BE A FEAT UNTO ITSELF.
BUT AT THE HEART OF NANAUATZIN, AT THE CENTER OF THIS DARK PLACE, WAS SOMETHING EVEN MORE DANGEROUS...
THE MINOTAUR MATADORS OF THE MAZE!
ONCE UPON A TIME--BEFORE NANAUATZIN BECAME LOST--THEY WERE VEGETARIANS, BUT WHEN THE CITY GREW MAD IN ISOLATION THEIR APPETITES CHANGED INTO WANTING SOMETHING FATTY AND TENDER.
THOSE BULL-BASTARDS WANTED TO EAT US!
SO THE GOAL WAS TO FIND THE CITY, NAVIGATE THE MAZE AND AVOID BECOMING A SNACK.


OKAY, I WANT TO INTERRUPT HERE TO SAY THAT THIS IS AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF A PERFECTLY PERFORMED SLEEPER HOLD.
NOTICE HOW EVEN THIS GUY KNOWS TO COMPRESS BOTH CAROTID ARTERIES WITHOUT CRUSHING THE AIRWAY.
THAT'S HOW YOU DO IT.
WHICH IS BAD FOR THIS GUY/GIRL/WHATEVER... CAUSE, YOU KNOW, THEY'RE GONNA GET EATEN.
WHICH, I WOULD ARGUE, HOWEVER BAD, IS BETTER THAN TAKING ONE IN THE SEAT.
CAUSE THAT'S JUST A CRAPPY WAY TO GO OUT.
OKAY, I'M DRAWING A BLANK... WHAT CAME AFTER THE CITY?
YOU DON'T REMEMBER?
WHY WOULD I ASK IF I REMEMBERED?
GOOD POINT...BUT HOW CAN YOU NOT REMEMBER TOPHETTI'S TUNNEL OF TERROR?
BECAUSE IT'S GOT A STUPID, AND FORGETTABLE, NAME?
NO, BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENED THERE...

FOR YEARS THE TUNNEL WAS USED BY THE CORTEZ CARTEL TO SMUGGLE DRUGS AND SEX SLAVES INTO THE UNITED STATES AND TO FUNNEL MONEY AND FIREARMS BACK INTO MEXICO.
ON ONE PARTICULAR SCORCHING DAY IN JUNE, THE CABALLEROS-- A RIVAL CARTEL-- ATTEMPTED A TAKEOVER OF THE CORTEZ BUSINESS.
THEY MURDERED ESTIBAN CORTEZ--THE KINGPIN OF THE FAMILY--AND CHASED HIS SON, JAVI, TO THIS TUNNEL AS HE TRIED TO ESCAPE THE CABALLEROS.
UNFORTUNATELY FOR JAVI, THERE WERE TWO THINGS HE DID NOT KNOW AT THIS POINT:
1. THAT THE MOMENT HE CHOSE TO FLEE WAS AT THE EXACT SAME TIME THAT 100 WHORES FROM HERMOSILLO AND A SMALL ARMY OF CORTEZ LOYALISTS CARRYING 500 POUNDS OF COCAINE WERE MAKING THEIR WAY THROUGH THE TUNNEL.
AND 2. THE TUNNEL HAD COLLAPSED 1 MILE FROM THE EXIT IN THE U.S.
THE CABALLEROS SEALED THE ENTRANCE IN MEXICO, IN ESSENCE BURYING EVERYONE ALIVE.
THE FIRST DAY SAW THE CONTINUAL RAPE OF THE WOMEN AND THE LAST OF THEIR WATER BEING CONSUMED.
AFTER THE SECOND DAY, SOME DRUG-ADDLED SOUL CAME UP WITH THE IDEA THAT MAYBE THEY COULD DRINK THE BLOOD OF THE WEAKEST OF THEM TO SURVIVE.
BY THE THIRD DAY THE TUNNEL HAD DESCENDED INTO THE TYPE OF MURDEROUS HELL THAT NO MAN COULD ESCAPE WITH HIS SANITY INTACT.

IN FACT, NO MAN OR WHORE LEFT THAT PLACE WITH THEIR LIVES OR THEIR SOUL. AND NOW IT'S BECOME A TUNNEL OF THE DAMNED.
NO ONE ESCAPES UNAFFECTED
HEY, YOU HUNGRY?
YEAH. I'LL CALL AHEAD FOR CURBSIDE.

SODOM'S DINER
OH MY...OH, MAN...
OH. OH. OH...
THIS IS THE BEST THING I'VE EVER TASTED.
IT'S THE HOT DOG OF THE GODS.
AN OLYMPI-DOG.
DOG-BROSIA.
IT SAYS HERE THAT SODOM DINER'S WORLD FAMOUS HOT DOGS ARE A COMBINATION OF SEVEN DIFFERENT KINDS OF MEAT...
THIS IS FANTASTIC. WE SHOULD REALLY TURN THIS INTO A CHAIN OF RESTAURANTS.
"BEEF, BACON, BISON...
"DEER, ELK, PHEASANT...
PHHUTTT!
"AND THE DINER'S SECRET INGREDIENT...
"MYSTERY MEAT NUMBER SEVEN."

"MYSTERY MEAT, HUH...WHAT DO YOU THINK IT IS?"
ZZZZZZZ CH-CHUNK!
I DUNNO. MAYBE LAMB.
WHO CARES, RIGHT? ANYTHING THIS TASTY, ALL I WANT TO KNOW IS CAN I HAVE SECONDS.
HERE'S YOUR BILL.
HEY... WHAT'S THIS?
IT'S, YOUR. BILL.
NO, I MEAN WHAT'S THIS--IT'S ALREADY GOT THE TIP INCLUDED AND IT'S, WHAT, THIRTY PERCENT?
ARE YOU %$@#$% CRAZY?
THIS IS CURBSIDE SERVICE. YOU BRING FOOD, YOU BRING BILL...THAT'S YOUR ENTIRE JOB. YOU DIDN'T EVEN TAKE THE ORDER, WE CALLED IT IN.
AND FOR THAT YOU WANT THIRTY PERCENT?
YOU KNOW WHAT, I DON'T EVEN THINK YOU'RE PREGNANT. I THINK THAT'S SOME KIND OF MALFORMED GUT OR A STAGE PROP YOU'RE HOPING WILL KEEP THE CUSTOMERS FROM COMPLAINING...
GUESS WHAT SISTER-- EITHER SHOW ME AN ULTRASOUND OR TAKE OFF THIS TIP...
RIGHT NOW, YOUR ASS IS GETTIN' A DOLLAR.

LOOK, I REALLY NEED THE MONEY...YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF BURDEN SOMETHING LIKE THIS IS.
SHOW IT OR STOW IT, SISTER.
OKAY... FINE.
RRRARAARR!
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM, MAN!
GIVE HER THE MONEY!
RRRARAARR!
GIVE HER THE MONEY!!!!
GIVE HER THE MONEY!!!!
AAAAHHHHH!
WHAT THE $%^@#!!
WHACK!
WHAM!
AFTER THAT WE MOVED ON TO THE LOCATION OF THE LAST CHALLENGE:
THE DAREDEVIL DEATH COURSE OF MISTER KEN EVIL, ESQUIRE.

THE BLACK SANTAS AND THE NEEDY WOMEN OF RENO ARRIVED AT THE DEATH COURSE BEFORE US ON ACCOUNT OF HAVING ONLY A SINGLE HOT DOG AT THE DINER BEFORE MOVING ON...
HOW DOES SOMEONE DO THAT? HOW DO YOU EAT JUST ONE?
I HAVE NO IDEA--IT SEEMS IMPOSIBLE, AND YET, HERE THEY ARE.
DEATH COURSE
THE BLACK SANTAS MADE IT THROUGH THE COURSE UNSCATHED.
BUT THE CHALLENGE AT MISTER EVIL'S IS THE ONLY ONE THAT TAKES PLACE IN THE UNITED STATES--THEREFORE PRESENTING THE OPTIMAL AVENUE FOR MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS PHOTOS.
THE NEEDY WOMEN DE-BIKED POSTHASTE.
ARIA! ARIA!
HEY! EYES' UP HERE!
RIGHT. SORRY. SO TELL US, WHAT IS THAT YOU'RE WEARING?
NOTHIN' MUTHA $#%^-ERS!
CENSORED
AND WHAT ABOUT YOU TWO, HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN TOGETHER?
OH, WE'RE JUST FRIENDS. I'M ACTUALLY NOT ALL THAT INTO GIRLS.
AND WHAT IS THAT ANYWAY--IT'S JUST LABELS. I'M YOUNG AND EXPERIMENTAL...
THE THING TO REMEMBER IS THAT WE'RE ALL DIFFERENT AND...
SO DIFFERENT
YEAH. LIKE I HAVE A MY NOSE PIERCED AND SHE HAS HER TONGUE PIERCED.
CENSORED
AND THE CANADIANS.
FOR THE TIBETIANS.
AND WHAT ABOUT YOU, ARIA?
OUTRAGEOUS BEHAVIOR!
OUTRAGEOUS BEHAVIOR!
THIS LEFT ONLY THE TWO OF US AND THE BLACK SANTAS COMPETING FOR THE TROPHY. THEN IT WAS TIME FOR THE INEVITABLE.
HEY, I'VE HAD A LOT OF FUN TODAY, BUT THESE PEOPLE PAID ME A LOT OF MONEY TO MAKE SURE YOU DON'T WIN.
I HAVE TO KICK YOUR ASS NOW.
TO THE DEATH THEN.

Rules:

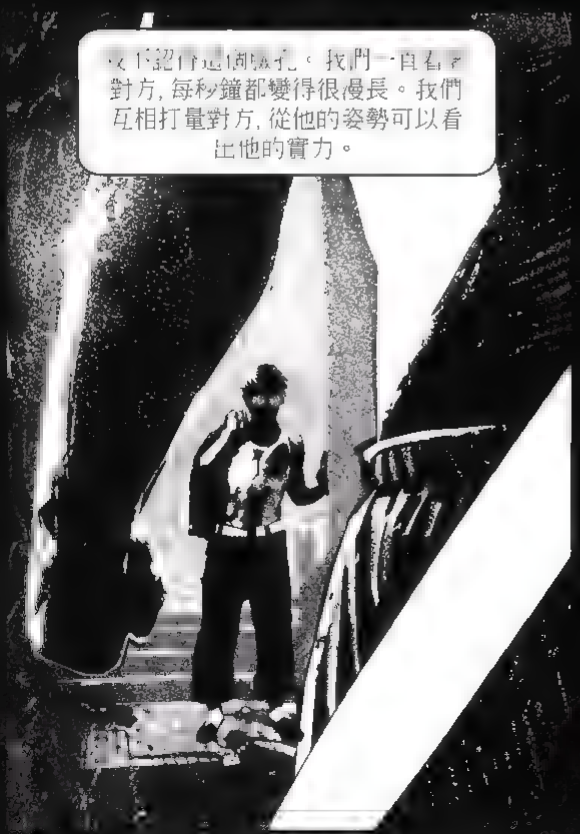
- Take turns. Deadpool always goes first.
- Use a single die.
- If you roll a 2, you get to roll again.
- Land on 5 or 10, jump forward.
- Land on 15 or 16, slide backwards.
- When playing as Shang-Chi: If you roll a 5, you can choose to punch your opponent in the face.
- When playing as Deadpool, if you roll a 6, you can choose to punch yourself in the face and send your opponent back to the starting line.

HUFF.
HUFF.
HUFF.
HUFF.
HUFF.
HUFF.
HUFF.
HUFF.
HUFF.
YOU KNOW WHAT I CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT?
THOSE HOT DOGS!
I'VE NEVER FELT THIS WAY ABOUT FOOD BEFORE.
I KNOW. IT'S LIKE I'D RATHER BE EATING THOSE THAN DOING ANYTHING ELSE.
SO WHAT DO YOU SAY WE FORGET THIS RACE, HEAD BACK TO THE DINER, ASK THAT DEMON-POSSESSED WAITRESS FOR FORGIVENESS...
BUT YOU SAID YOU LOVE RACING.
NOT AS MUCH AS I LOVE EATING.

SO A SHORT WHILE LATER WE FOUND OURSELVES BACK AT THE DINER--EATING THE BEST DOGS ON THE PLANET--AND TRYING TO GUESS EXACTLY WHAT THAT MYSTERY MEAT WAS.
I REMEMBER THERE WAS ONE THING THAT DID KIND OF BOTHER ME.
BABY KITTENS MAYBE?
NAH-- A LITTLE TOO GAMEY FOR CAT.
I GOTTA TELL YOU, THE BLACK SANTAS WINNING THE RACE DOES CHAFE A BIT.
BUT YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT...
IN FACT YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THE RACE ANYMORE.
WHAT DID YOU DO?
WELL, I FIGURED THERE WAS THE POSSIBILITY THAT YOU COULD FINISH THE RACE FIRST EVEN IF I TRIED TO STOP YOU, SO I WIRED THE TROPHY TO BLOW WHEN THE WINNER LIFTED IT UP IN THE AIR.
I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE YOU WERE GOING TO BLOW ME UP.
WELL THAT WAS BEFORE I GOT TO KNOW YOU. HOW WAS I SUPPOSE TO KNOW YOU WERE A COOL GUY?
WAIT, ARE YOU POUTING? OH STOP THAT!
FINE.
I'M SORRY I PLANNED TO BLOW YOU UP...

IS THAT BETTER?
YES.
AND I THINK IT'S SOMETHING IN THE RODENT FAMILY... POSSUM, MAYBE
WHO CARES?
HERE'S TO THREE YEARS OF NO RACING...
AND TO THREE YEARS OF GOOD EATING.
THAT'LL BE $752.37.
END

I have spent the last two days in Hong Kong, being closely watched. By whom I know not. Yet I can feel their cold stares upon my back. Never getting too close or too far. -



I do not recognize the face. And as we stand facing each other, [illegible] grows heavy. Each of us assessing the other's strength. I learn much from his stance.

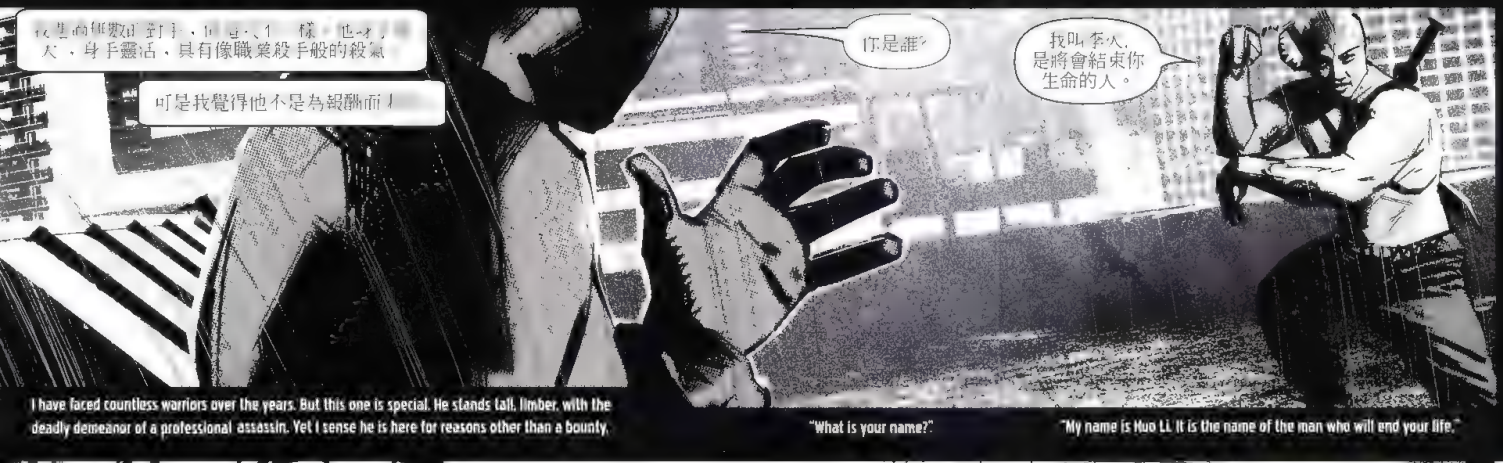
"You've been following me. What do you want?"

"They say you are the best, Shang Chi. That you are a living weapon. I am here to see how good you really are."

"That was a mistake."
"Because you're now going to find out."

The art of battle is a dance.
他展開，我退縮。
When he expands, I contract.
我展開
When he contracts...I expand.
我一看到破綻
就把握機會。
And when the opportunity presents itself--I seize it.

他的戰鬥技巧一流。他已經放棄
自尊，克服最大的難關---自己。
My enemy is well trained in the arts of combat.
He has surrendered to pride. Overcoming his greatest obstacle--himself.
For he who does that fears nothing.



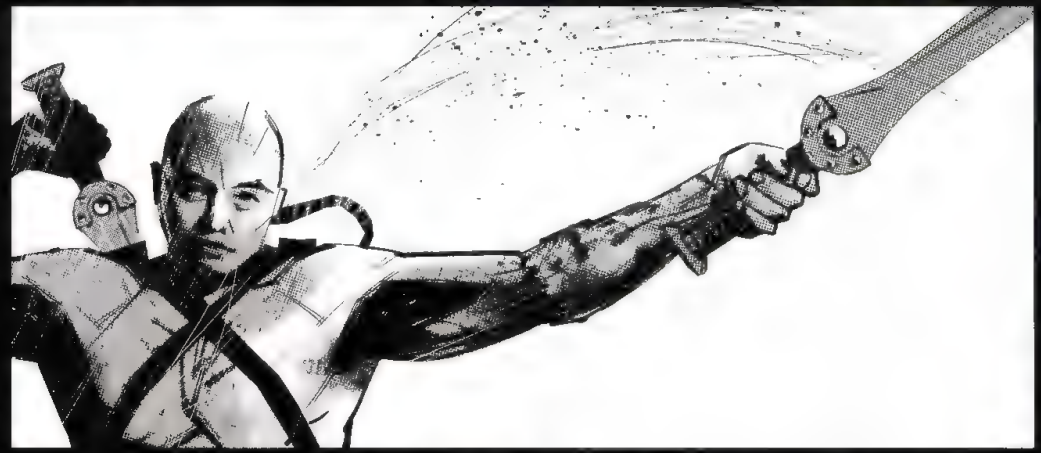
I have faced countless warriors over the years. But this one is special. He stands tall, limber, with the deadly demeanor of a professional assassin. Yet I sense he is here for reasons other than a bounty.

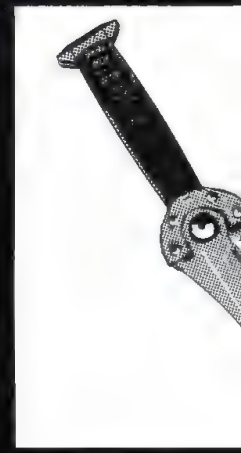
"What is your name?"

"My name is Huo Li. It is the name of the man who will end your life."

"And since you are certain of my death Huo Li--surely you can say who sent you?"

"I am here on my own accord. I am here for vengeance."

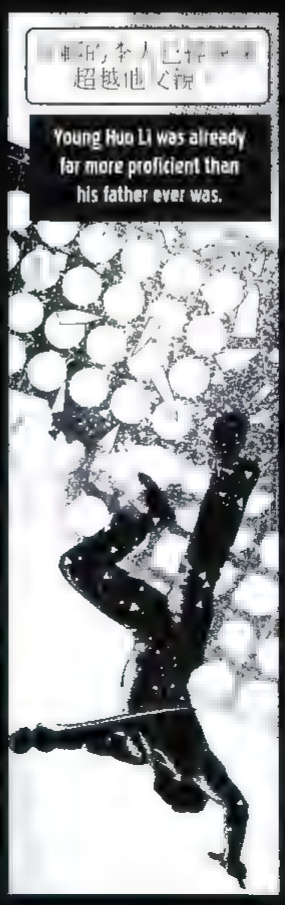




"Whose vengeance do you seek?"

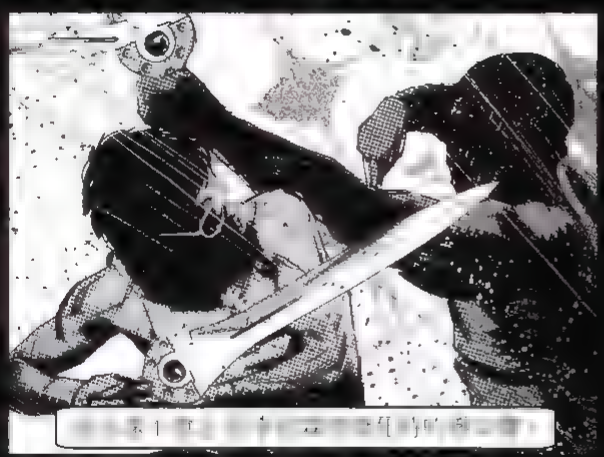
He was correct. I understood. It had been years since I had seen that instrument of death. It belonged to a mercenary who called himself The Death Dealer. His real name was Li Chang-Lin. He was a traitor to his country. A former MI6 operative who went rogue.

Li Chang-Lin was also an ally to my father.



"It is my duty to obey--and my honor to grant the celestial one's request."

"This does not have to go any further. There is no dishonor in walking away."
"I've trained my entire life for this moment."
"AAAAAHHHHHH!!"

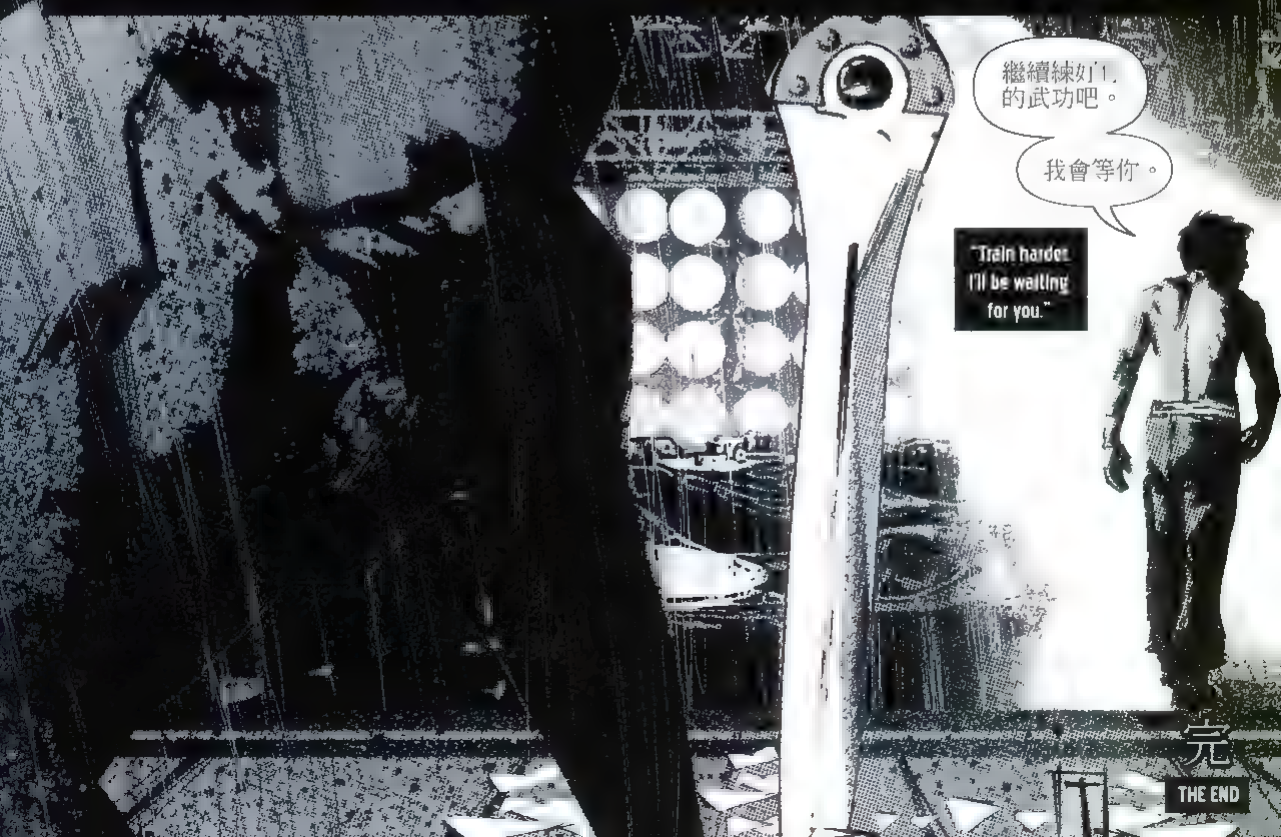


I will never forget Li Chang-Lin's screams as the flames took him.

To this day I wonder: Could I have spared his life?

But I can spare his son's.

"I understand your need for revenge.
Just know this is a road that ends in death. And it will not be mine."



I AM MY FATHER'S SON. THE BLOOD ON MY HANDS ATTESTS TO HIS FOUL PARENTAGE.
FOR THOUGH HE LED ME WITH HIS LIES TO KILL, I AM NO LESS GUILTY OF THE CRIME.
THOUGH HE RAISED ME TO BE A WEAPON AIMED AT HIS ENEMIES, I AM NO LESS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STEPS I HAVE TAKEN ON THE ROAD OF LIFE.
THOUGH HE BLINDED MY EYES TO THE UNPLUMBABLE DEPTHS OF HIS EVIL, I AM NO LESS TO BLAME FOR HAVING COVERED THEM WITH WILLFUL IGNORANCE.
AND IF I AM, IN ALL THESE THINGS, MY FATHER'S SON--

THEN SURELY HE IS AS WELL.
THOUGH THE BLOOD IN OUR VEINS IS UTTERLY DIFFERENT, MY FATHER MOLDED US AS BROTHERS.
M'NAI. BECOME MIDNIGHT. AND NOW, BECOME SOMETHING ELSE AGAIN.
SOMETHING RISEN FROM THE DEAD!

IN THE SHOCK OF THE MOMENT...
...SEEING HIM AGAIN...
...I CANNOT RESIST THE PULL OF OUR PAST.
FRATERNITY.
ENMITY.
MORTALITY.
WHATEVER STRANGE FATE HAS LED TO THIS ENCOUNTER, I WILL NOT LET IT END AS BEFORE.

AT LAST I HAVE FOUND HIM. MY EARLIEST AND MOST POTENT MEMORY.
FROZEN IN THE VACUUM OF MY PAST AS IF IN DEEPEST SPACE.
KREE SCIENCE, THAT RESTORED LIFE TO MY BODY AND STOLE MY VOICE, HAS DENIED ME MORE THAN A PITIFUL FEW MEMORIES.
FACED NOW WITH THE CHANCE TO BREATHE LIFE INTO THIS TABLEAUX, I FIND I AM FROZEN MYSELF.
FOR FEAR THAT MY SLIGHTEST MOVE WILL SHATTER THE MOMENT AND LOSE ME THIS OPPORTUNITY.

M'NAI.
ALL RIGHT, HONG KONG FOOEY, HOW 'BOUT YOU CLIMB OFF THAT CAR BEFORE YA PUT A DENT IN IT.
AN' TELL YER PALLY UP THERE TO FLOAT ON DOWN WHERE WE CAN TALK TO HIM.
OFFICERS, WE DO NOT MEAN TO CAUSE ALARM.
AIN'T NO ONE ALARMED HERE, KWAI CHANG, BUT YOUR POSIN' HAS TRAFFIC SNARLED UP.
ALL RIGHT, PALLY, TIME TA COME BACK TA EARTH.
I AM SORRY FOR THE INCONVENIENCE. I WOULD BE HAPPY TO DEPART, BUT I CANNOT SPEAK FOR HIM.
INDEED, I CANNOT SAY FOR CERTAIN IF HE WILL SPEAK FOR HIMSELF.
TIGHT-LIPPED IS HE?
WELL IF HE WON'T TALK HERE, YA CAN BOTH TALK AT THE STATION.
THESE ARMED MEN, SOLDIERS BY THEIR UNIFORMS, WHY DO THEY MENACE HIM?
LET'S MAKE THIS EASY, BRUCE LEE.
CHAINS!
NO! IF THEY TAKE HIM I MAY NEVER KNOW WHO I AM!

STOP!
NO!
GUNF!
GNT!
UNH!
HIS SPEED! GREATER THAN EVEN BEFORE. AND FROM THE SOUND OF HIS BLOWS, HIS STRENGTH AS WELL.
THE OFFICERS STAND NO CHANCE AGAINST HIM. ANOTHER STRIKE AND THEY WILL SURELY DIE.
IT SEEMS, MIDNIGHT, THAT YOUR JOURNEY IN THE AFTERLIFE HAS NOT CHANGED YOU.
HE CALLS ME BY NAME!
THERE IS NOTHING TO BE PROVED BY OUR FIGHTING. I HAVE BESTED YOU ONCE ALREADY.
BESTED ME? WE HAVE FOUGHT. THEN MY MEMORY IS TRUE.
WE ARE ENEMIES!
LET US HAVE NO FURTHER STRUGGLES.

WE SHALL SEE WHO HAS BESTED WHO.
WHOOOOOSH
CRASH
I HAVE MADE A GRAVE FOR MY ENEMY. AND IN DOING SO, BURIED MY PAST AS WELL.
ALWAYS, I ACT WITHOUT WEIGHING THE COST.

CHOK!
WHAP!

KRAK!
KRAK!
THAK!

KRAK!
WHO AM I
WHO AM I
MY BROTHER.
YOUR NAME IS M'NAI.
OUR FATHER'S SON.
END

THE TAO OF THE WARRIOR:
FROM NOVICE TO LO FU ZAI
By Shang-Chi
(edited by Robin Furth)

Thirty spokes converge at the hub,
But emptiness completes the wheel.

--Tao Te Ching
Lao Tzu

My father named me Shang-Chi, which means rising of the spirit. He hoped that one day I would become the world's greatest kung fu master, as well as its most accomplished assassin. In his private retreat in Hunan Province, he trained me in the ancient art of kung fu. His methods were rigorous and at times brutal, but I was an eager pupil. I believed my father was a great man—the savior of mankind—and I was proud to call him master. Even after I learned of his evil nature, I never rejected the art of kung fu. The Tao of the Warrior is sacred, and not even my father could corrupt it.

When I was a novice, I called my father master. He was my teacher, and I held him in great respect. For many hours at a time he would make me sit before the flickering flame of a candle. To learn to move, he said, you must first master stillness. I had to breathe in through my nose and out through my mouth. This, he said, was the only way to clear my mind and master ch'i. Ch'i, he told me, was the god within: it was breath, vitality, the root of my force. One drop of water might be powerless, but he who could harness the energy of the ocean . . . nothing could stop him! He was like the tsunami. But I was a boy and I grew restless with long sitting, and then I grew bored. When I began to nod off . . . THWACK! My master's bamboo stick came down upon my back!

To know your enemy you must first know yourself, and to know yourself you must gaze within. From those first struggles with meditation came my ability to control my breathing and my muscles, even the beating of my heart.

The Western fighter thinks he has a mind and a body. The Chinese fighter knows he is mindbody. Soon after my first lesson my father presented me with two buckets of sand. He instructed me to plunge my hands into the sand, over and over. The skin chaffed and then bled. When I complained he told me to imagine the pain in my hands diffusing throughout my body. I shut my eyes and visualized the throbbing agony as a florescent red light. I imagined this light spreading up my arms, over my shoulders, down my torso, through my legs, and out through the bottoms of my feet. As the light spread, the color grew dimmer. The pain eased. Each day I plunged my hands into the sand until the skin hardened with calluses. Then my master introduced pebbles into the sand. Once again my hands bled and I had to imagine that red light spreading throughout my body, losing its intensity as it diffused. Finally, when I thought my hands could harden no more, my father had me plunge my fists into buckets of sharp stones. Within a month, I felt no pain and I did not bleed.

The ancient Kung Fu masters learned their methods of attack and defense from the animals. Nature is full of warriors. Once there was an old man who liked to sit and contemplate near a still pond. One day, while he was fanning himself, a crane that had waded into the pond was attacked by an ape. The old man feared for the beautiful crane since the ape was much larger and stronger, but the crane dodged and struck, evading its enemy's strong arms while thrusting with its beak and beating with its powerful wings. It drove off the ape. On the way home, the old man was attacked by two robbers, but by mimicking the movements of the crane, he defeated them both. Balancing on one leg, the crane warrior uses long range kicks, and his fists stab like a beak. The crane is tranquil but also swift and full of grace. Its essence is quiescent; its form is elegance.

To fight like an animal, you must understand how the animal thinks and breathes, not just how she moves. Since the human warrior is weaker than the beasts, he must make up for his lack of strength with his intelligence. Only by studying the animals can we learn the art of instantaneous attack.

When choosing a style, make certain it fits your spirit as well as your body. The monkey is agile, clever, and full of deceptions. His style of fighting is good at night, when his fast hand and foot movements are rendered invisible. The dragon is powerful and flowing. The dragon fighter gracefully swerves away from an attack, so that punches and kicks miss him. The leopard is known for her speed, and her emphasis is upon muscular strength.

Not all animals have physical strength, nor do they need it. During the Ming Dynasty, a follower of Shaolin known as Wang Lang was constantly being beaten by his classmates in combat. They were larger than he, and heavier, and so bested him. But one evening, while resting beneath a tree, Wang Lang witnessed a praying mantis fighting a cicada. Though the cicada was larger, the praying mantis used its long arms to defeat its enemy. For many days, Wang Lang studied the praying mantis's fighting style, and from this came Tanglangquan, or Praying Mantis Kung Fu.

To learn my art, I trained eight hours each day for many years. I used the mookjong (wooden man) to perfect my technique. Only by using the mookjong could I learn to judge the angles of my attack, and the correct distances. But the mookjong could not fight back. I could not afford to have flowery fists and embroidered kicks: I had to battle against living opponents, ones whose moves I could not predict. My father took me to the city's poorest, wildest slums to battle street fighters. Hum kah chan! He made me scream. Death to your families! Nine fighters attacked me in a narrow alley. I fought like the tiger, blocking with my arms, deflecting punches, giving side-kicks to the face, heart punches to the

chest. I emerged from the alley alive.

Do not confuse fa (technique) with gong (force). Fa refers to your methods of attack and defense. It is visible. Placing your leg behind your opponents leg and pushing him so that he falls, is a technique. Gong is invisible. It refers to your ability and efficiency, your accuracy, power, and speed. To harness force is also to harness ch'i, and to master the self. Like the young tree, the man who masters force survives strong winds and storms because he moves and sways with the elements. He does not fight against them, he becomes like them. When I was a novice, my master dropped a live scorpion onto my open palm. I knew that if she felt the energy in my skin, the trembling of my fear, she would sting me and I would die. I focused my breath so that I would not tremble. I lowered my heart rate so I would not sweat. She was so alert, I had to sway with the breeze and become like the sand of the desert.

The word Kung Fu will not be found in ancient texts. Instead one might find wuyi: wu meaning martial, and yi meaning art. In Mandarin and Cantonese, they say quanshu, art of the fists, or quanfa, technique of the fists. These words refer to unarmed combat, and the forms of hitting and kicking. There are many more names, both for the art of bare-fisted fighting and the arts of weaponry. But no matter what name you call it, the art of Kung Fu is ancient. It is as old as mankind itself.

Bare handed fighting is best, but if you must use weapons, forge your own. The nunchaku is deadly when hurled toward your enemy. Using it will strengthen your arms. Do not practice with metal and chain at first, but wood and rope. Do not move on to harder materials until you have mastered the butterfly, and can dance with the weapon at speed. The ten-sided, short-handled club helps you develop pace and vigor. Practice with it while standing in flowing water. With your mind, evaporate the water and move as if in air.

A kung fu master is a disciple of the way of the tiger, the sign of the dragon. He follows a code of strict discipline which is spiritual as well as physical. He follows the Tao, and devotes his life to his practice. After my oral and practical exams, I had to face Tar Shui, the Test of the Tunnel. Only in this way could I become a true Master of Kung Fu. Though I knew that many did not survive this final test, I was ready to face the challenge.

When the day came for me to face Tar Shui, my master took me to a sacred Taoist mountain, and left me there at the entrance to the cave. I was allowed to wear only minimal clothing, and my feet were bare. Though torches illuminated the mouth of the cave, the air was cold as the breath of an open grave, and I knew that for many, a grave was what it would be. But I was determined to become a master.

First I had to walk across yards of shattered glass and burning coals. With the light step of the crane, I was able to pass. Next I had to slip beneath a heavy iron door spiked with large,

downward-pointing spearheads. But the door was supported only by a few bamboo poles, which were in turn held up by a maze of thin bamboo sticks. If I but brushed one stick in my passing, the door would have fallen on me and I would have died. With the smooth, precise movements of the snake, I slithered through.

Next I had to walk across a thin blade, the only bridge across an oil slick. Yet even as I focused the ch'i in my feet so that the blade would not cut them, a wild dog came gnashing at me. Its chain meant that it could only graze my heels, but the shock of it was meant to frighten me and to make me fall into the oil. I breathed in through my nose and out through my mouth. In my mind I held an image of the flame, and like the flame which always burns upright, I remained on my feet.

My last challenge was a huge boulder studded with spearheads. Harnessing my ch'i, I pressed my hands against the points. The boulder would not move. I pressed my back against the spikes and, summoning my ch'i, made the flesh hard and impenetrable. I focused my mind on an image of the shifting boulder. Soon I heard the first creaks of movement, and the boulder began to roll.

Finally, I smelled smoldering fire and the stink of hot iron. I knew what it meant. Blocking the cave's exit was a huge cauldron of red hot iron fillings. From each side stuck out metal tiger claws. Summoning my ch'i, I saw my arms transform to blocks of ice. I lifted the cauldron which could have defeated ten men, caring nothing for the smell of my own roasting flesh. Staggering forward, I placed the smoldering cauldron at the feet of my father who waited outside the cave. I bowed and he smiled. I had become Lo Fu Zai, Master of Kung Fu.

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